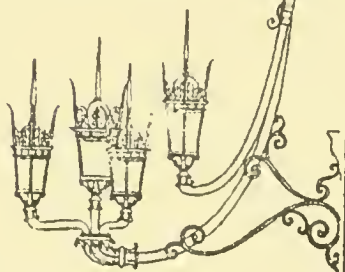


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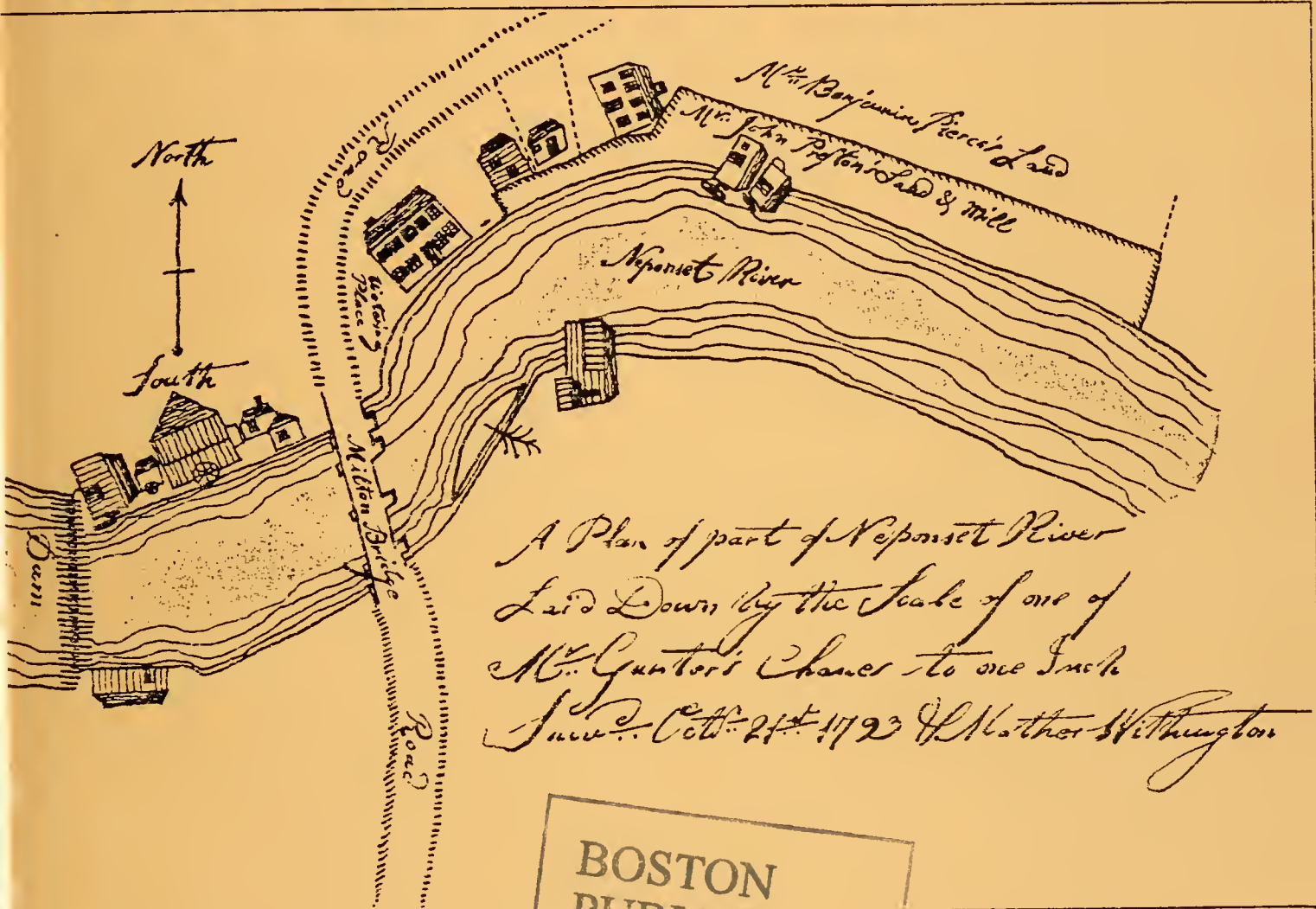
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BOSTON
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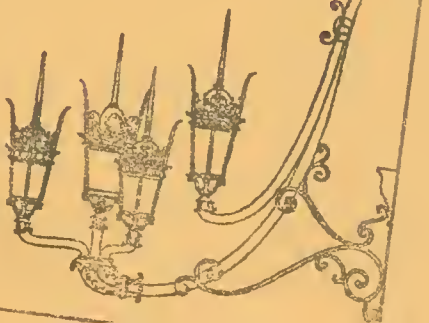


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LOWER MILLS: A HERITAGE STATE PARK



BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY



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1978

LOWER MILLS
HERITAGE STATE PARK

A Proposal prepared by the
Mayor's Office of Program
Development, the Boston Re-
Development Authority and the
Boston Landmarks Commission

OPD

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with special thanks to:

Mr. Joseph Englesby, Planning Department, Town of Milton
Mr. Walter Holcombe, Neponset Conservation Association



KEVIN H. WHITE
MAYOR

CITY OF BOSTON
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY HALL, BOSTON

October 27, 1978

Mr. Richard Kendall, Commissioner
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs
Department of Environmental Management
Saltonstall Building
100 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02202

Dear Commissioner Kendall:

I am pleased to submit this proposal for a Heritage State Park in the Lower Mills area of Boston.

As you know and as the following pages will document, the Lower Mills area is uniquely rich in historic and architectural resources. Today the mills themselves are the only surviving cluster of 19th century industrial buildings in the City.

Although the area has undergone substantial change in land use, the presence of these buildings and the waterways, bridges and land that connect them are still colorful testimony to the City's 18th and 19th century development. The Heritage Park Program is an opportunity to unveil that history, preserve these resources and in so doing create a more attractive and prosperous urban neighborhood.

In addition, one of the important dimensions of the Heritage Park Program for Lower Mills is the possibility it offers for greater coordination of proposals for neighboring areas. The park concept in particular is an exciting and practical starting point for carrying out improvements for the entire Neponset River Valley. Stretching some twenty-five miles from Port Norfolk to the Blue Hills, the Valley and its environmental quality have been a subject of concern for some time. Many proposals for improving it have been made variously by the Town of Milton, the Neponset River Valley Commission, the Metropolitan District Commission and the City of Boston (particularly its Port Norfolk residents).

These recommendations have included:

- the creation of walking and jogging paths along the river, leading to and from the Mill area itself
- cleaning and dredging of the river (the only free-flowing waterway left in the City)
- canoe and boat launches at select locations along the river banks


Mr. Richard Kendall
October 27, 1978
page 2

-- relocation of industry and provision of
recreational open space in the Port Norfolk
area

While not formally part of this Heritage Park Proposal, these concepts will be more meaningful if they are anchored by concentrated investment in the Mill area itself. In assessing the likelihood of realizing all of these development proposals, our major concern -- and reason for optimism -- is the support and enthusiasm already expressed for the basic park concept by the Town of Milton, the Neponset Conservation Commission and numerous community groups.

We appreciate the assistance and encouragement your staff has already given us in preparing this proposal (under difficult constraints) and look forward to working with you further on its refinement.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Kevin H. White", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kevin H. White
Mayor

Lower Mills Heritage State Park Proposal

CONTENTS

- I. Letter of Submittal
- II. History and Heritage Resources
- III. Profile of Project Area
- IV. Heritage Park Concept
- V. Project Benefits
- VI. Appendix
 - o Project Summary and Cost Estimate
 - o Inventory and Description of Mill Area Buildings
 - o Letters of Support

LOCATION OF PROJECT AREA



HISTORY AND RESOURCES

Brief History

1. The Mills were one of the earliest centers of industry in the United States. Four years after the settlement of the town of Boston, a corn (grist) mill was established on the Dorchester side of the Neponset River, succeeding by only a year the first such mill in this country, located in Roxbury.

The Neponset was ideal for the development of 17th century mills--it had a sufficient flow of water year round, and was narrow enough not to require extensive damming. The Falls at Unguity, as the area was known, had a particular advantage in that the River makes an "S" curve in that location, thus making more river bank available for development and allowing for two small dams to be constructed fairly close together.

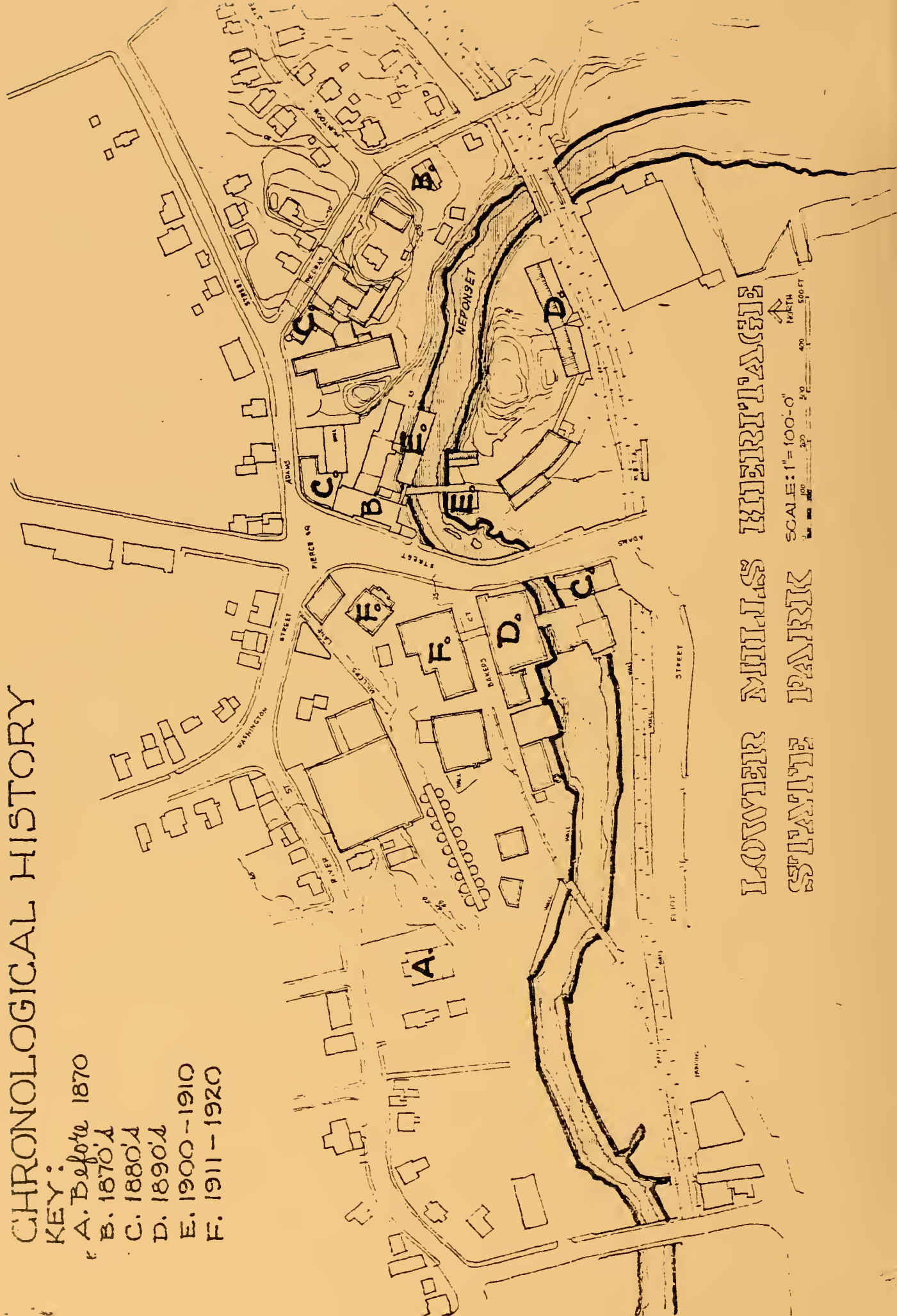
Israel Stoughton, who built the first mill, was required to build and maintain a bridge--which became the first bridge over the Neponset. Twenty years later, the elders of Boston and Plymouth decided that a road was needed to link the two communities, and laid out what was to be the Commonwealth's first major roadway on a route which incorporated the bridge at Lower Mills. This road, which was later named Adams Street, and passed along the crown of what is now known as Milton Hill, was, for a period of 170 years, the great thoroughfare between Boston and all points south.

Mrs. Stoughton's grist mill was the only industry on the Neponset for forty years, when a gun powder mill (1674) (the first such mill in the country) and a fulling mill (1688) were established at Lower Mills. An additional powder mill, saw mill,

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

KEY:

- A. Before 1870
- B. 1870-1
- C. 1880-1
- D. 1890-1
- E. 1900-1910
- F. 1911-1920



LOWELL MILLS INTERTRACHE
STATUTE PARK

SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"

0 100 200 300 400 500 FT

NORTH

slitting mill, and snuff factory were added during the 18th century, making the area one of the most important industrial centers in the country.

In 1765, John Hannon, with the financial assistance of Dr. James Baker, undertook the first serious attempt in America to manufacture chocolate on a large scale. Chocolate had been introduced into the colonies about ten years earlier by traders who took racks of cacao beans in the West Indies in exchange for rum. Made fashionable in the royal courts of Europe, the drink had proven popular. It became a standard household beverage when the British levied the infamous tax on tea during the years leading up to the Revolution.

The manufacture of chocolate was sufficiently simple and versatile that Hannon's first operations were in a rented grist mill. By 1790, James Baker had taken over Hannon's business, but it was another sixteen years before a mill was built specifically for the purpose of manufacturing chocolate. The mill was built on the site of the very first Neponset grist mill; and for the next century, the Baker Company continued the practice of replacing mills built for other purposes with chocolate mills built on the same sites. Some sites have been used three times for different buildings. By 1890, the Baker Company under ownership of Henry L. Pierce had taken over all seven of the early mill sites. By 1920, the Baker Company had expanded to the point that it had enveloped the lower half of Pierce Square.

HIGHEST MEDALS AWARDED

ESTABLISHED 1780.

WALTER BAKER & CO'S

CHOCOLATE
BROMA
AND COCOA
PREPARATIONS.



PARIS EXPOSITION 1867

VIENNA EXHIBITION 1873

DORCHESTER, MASS

"LA BELLE CHOCOLATIERE" from the original painting by LÉOTARD now in the Dresden Gallery.
Walter Baker & Co's Registered Trade Mark

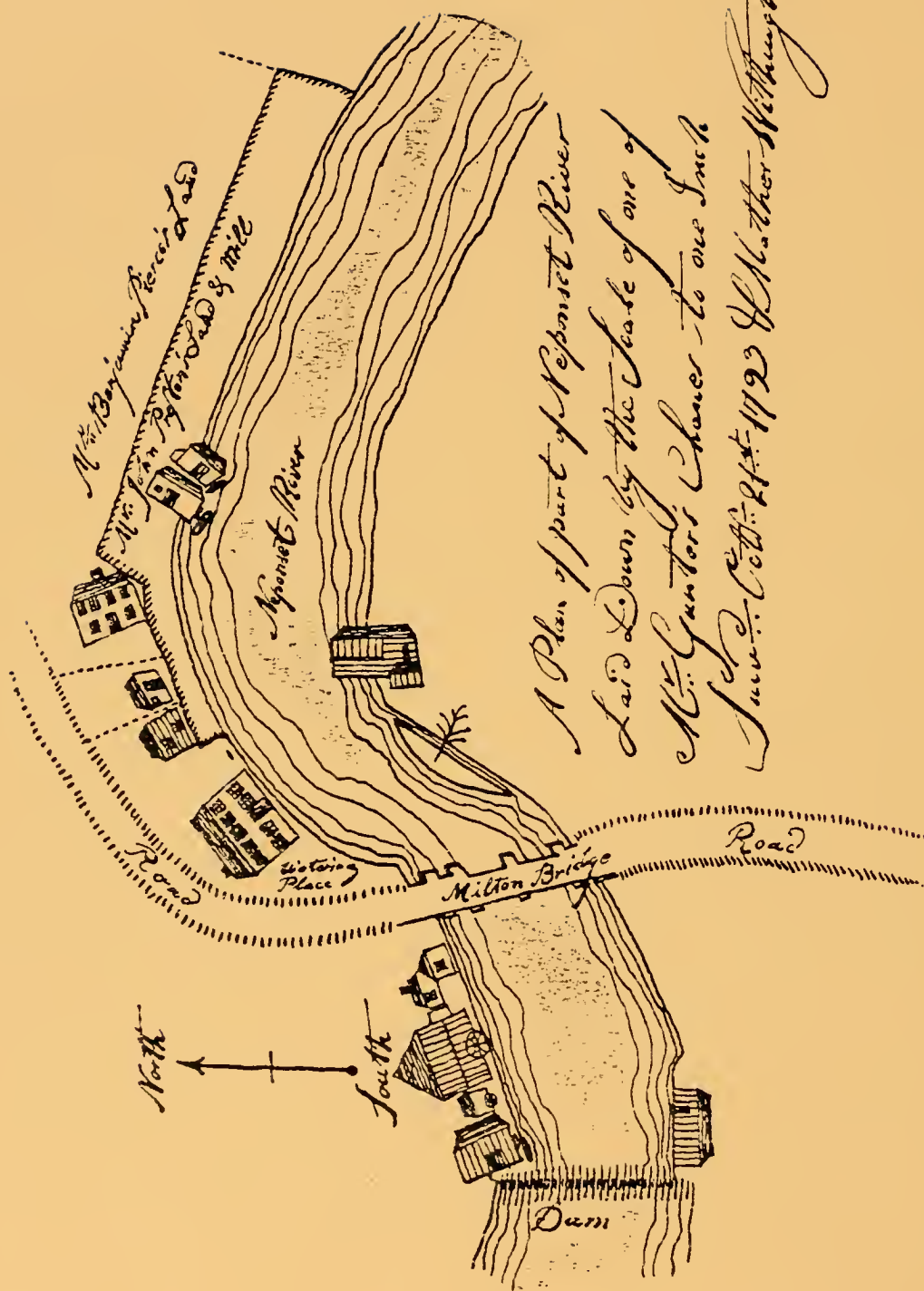
PHILADELPHIA EXPOSITION 1876

2. The River

Before there were mills, there was the river. The Neponset is one of three major tributaries flowing into Boston Harbor. Its flow is enhanced by the Mother Brook, the first canal in the United States, created for the purpose of robbing the Charles River of about one third of its water.

Before the industry and adjacent residential development came, the Neponset was a clean and thriving river. It apparently held a variety of fish species. In fact, the area of Lower Mills is reported to have been the fishing grounds of the local indian tribes before Mr. Houghton sited his grist mill there. The eventual demonstration of the Indians as a result of conflicts with the European colonists was heralded by this early action usurping their fishing grounds.

The Neponset was not only exceptionally suitable for water-powered industry, it also provided a means of transporting materials needed in the manufacturing process and the goods produced. As mentioned above, the production of chocolate involved the use of cacao beans from the West Indies, and thus became part of the triangular trade with Africa. The lower Neponset was also a center of activity during the great era of the China Trade. A well-protected estuary, the Neponset harbored coastal craft as well as sloops, ketches, and some schooners. A town landing was established just below the mills area in 1658, and Daniel Vose developed a wharf nearby during the 18th century. A stone pier still extant on the River is reported



A Plan of part of Mponset River
 Laid Down by the Scale of one of
 M^r. Gunter's Chances to one Inch

Surveyed Oct^r 24th 1793 by M^r. Walter Withington

to be over one hundred years old and served as a shipyard and dock for clipper ships.

With the advent of the railroads, and the move to larger, steam driven ships, the somewhat shallow Neponset estuary lost its commercial traffic by the latter half of the nineteenth century.

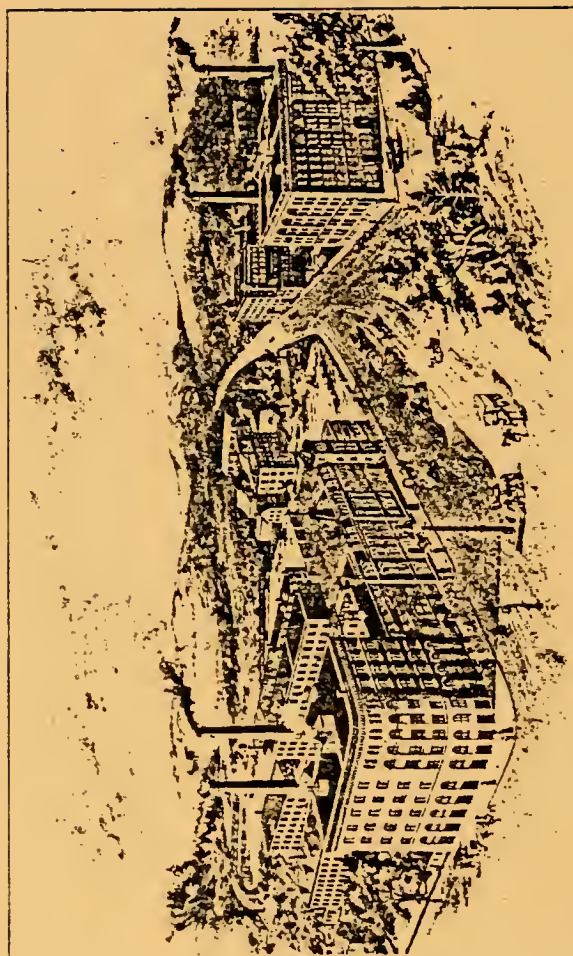
Inventory of Resources

1. The Mills

The industrial buildings remaining today in Lower Mills date primarily from the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. They represent roughly 700,000 square feet of space in twelve principal buildings owned by the Baker Company. Additional industrial space is found in the factory built for the Mason Regulator Company in 1888.

The Baker Company mills are unusually homogeneous in style, having been designed, for the most part, by a single architectural firm. The firm changed names over time, beginning as Bradlee, Winslow, and Wetherell. All but one of the remaining buildings are built of brick. Romanesque and Renaissance Revival styles prevail. The irregular topography of the site and the use of earlier sites for the present buildings produced, in the complex, a certain asymmetry and considerable visual interest.

Ancillary to the mills are a number of structures which are of interest in themselves. Prominent among these are the eighteen silos used for storing the cocoa seeds. A pedestrian bridge across the Neponset, the automobile bridge which incorporates

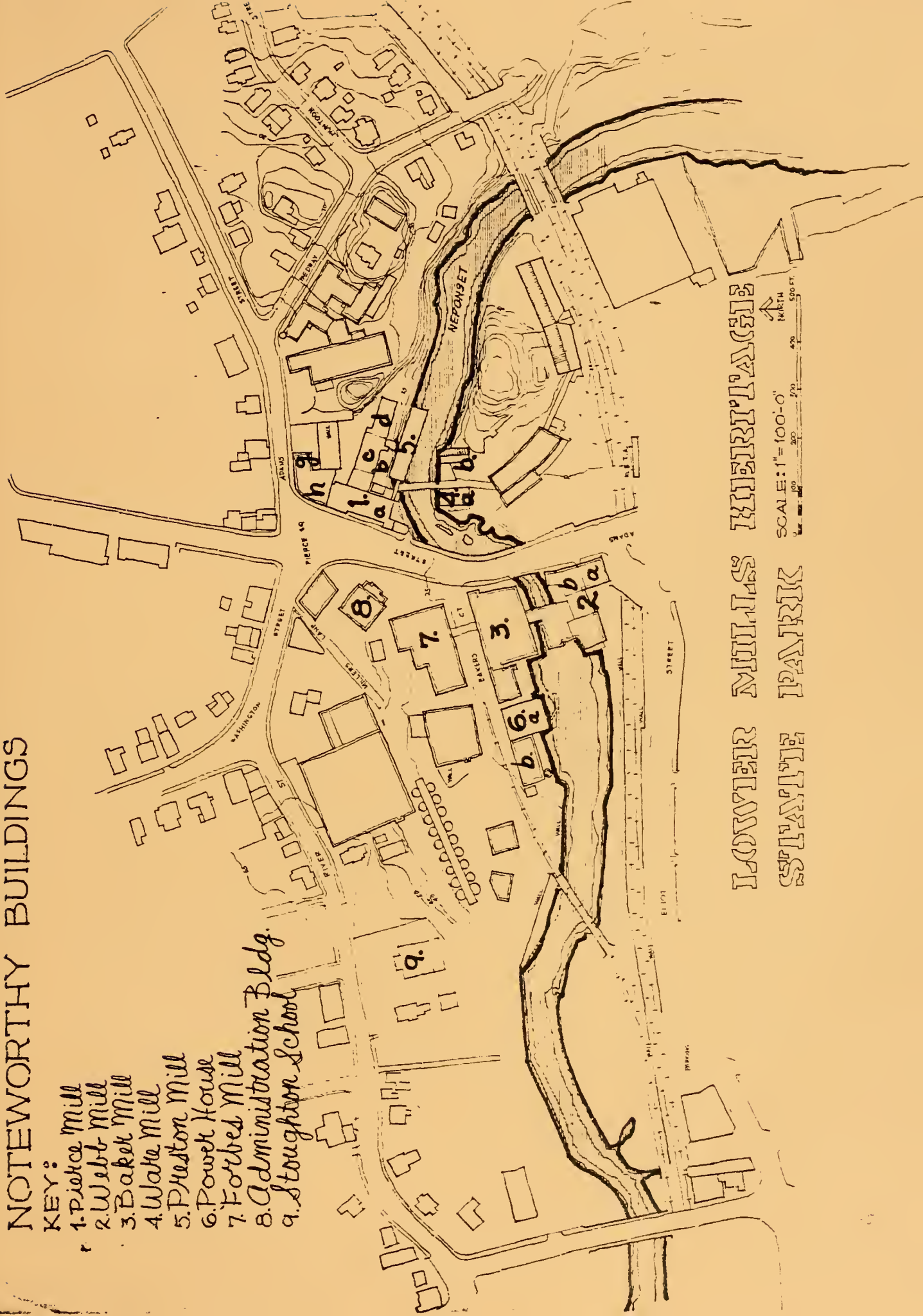


BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF WALTER BAKER & CO.'S MILLS, DORCHESTER, AND MILTON, MASS.

NOTEWORTHY BUILDINGS

KEY:

1. Pierce Mill
2. Webb Mill
3. Baker Mill
4. Wake Mill
5. Preston Mill
6. Powel House
7. Forbes Mill
8. Administration Bldg.
9. Stoughton School



LOWELL MILLS INTERLACHIE
STATE PARK

SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"
NORTH
0 100 200 300 400 500 FT.

three brick arches dating from the end of the eighteenth century, and numerous granite paved roadways speak to the circulation system of the industrial complex and are visually rich.

2. The River and its Surrounds

The Neponset twists in an "S" curve at Lower Mills and passes through a steep, rocky gorge. The slopes of the gorge on the Dorchester side are steep (rising sixty-seven feet) and covered with natural vegetation.

On the Milton side, a wooded knoll provides a viewing spot to watch the River and the mills. The effect is one which is remarkably rural.

Beyond the gorge, the River opens out into the lowlands of the Neponset estuary and is bounded by marshes, including the Metropolitan Park Reservation owned by the M.D.C.

In spite of its polluted condition, the River has considerable esthetic appeal.

3. The Spur Line

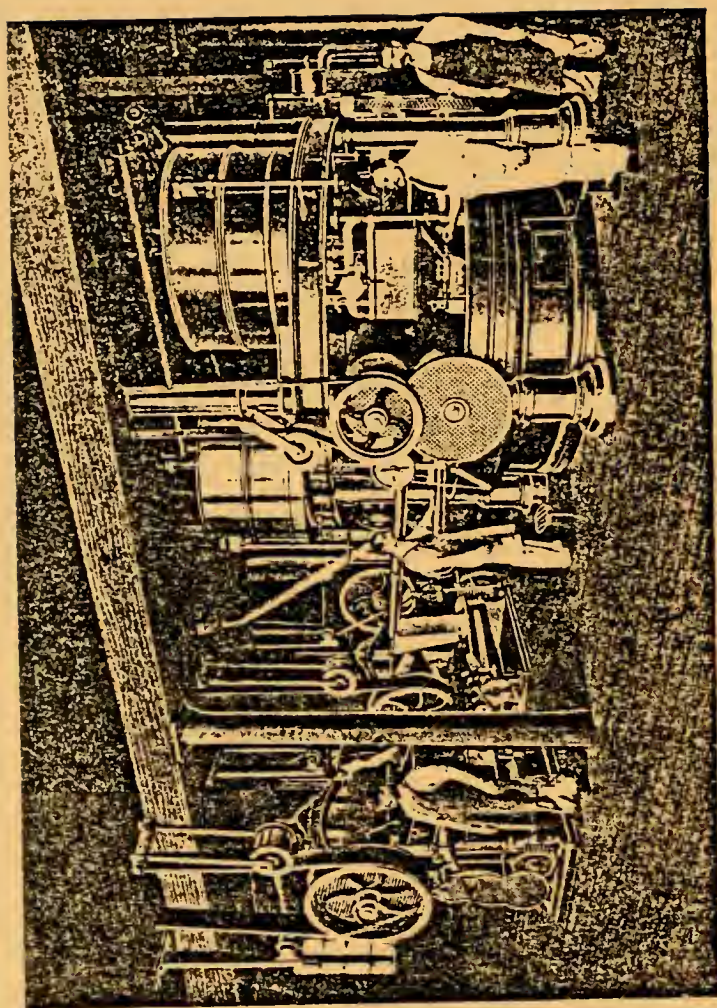
Adjacent to the Baker complex is an existing MBTA Right of Way which is part of the Red Line between Ashmont Station and Mattapan. This Right of Way occupies the bed of a spur line of the old Penn Central Railroad. The presence of this spur line had facilitated the nineteenth century industrial growth at Lower Mills, tieing in with the North/South Old Colony Line trackage.

Today, a portion of the MBTA Right of Way is no longer used on a regular basis and provides an opportunity for conversion to recreation use--notably a bikeway extending eventually from Dorchester Bay to the Charles River.

4. Historic Resources in Adjacent Areas

The communities of Milton and Dorchester offer a variety of resources which contribute to an understanding of Lower Mills in a larger context. Nearby Milton Hill had been the home of King Philip of the tribe of Wampanoag Indians who had used Unquity as their fishing ground. Later, Milton Hill, with its scenic views and fresh breezes and its strategic position astride the major thoroughfare south, became the home of the area's more prominent citizens--mill owners, ship builders, and the great merchants of the China Trade. Mr. I. Murray Forbes house is the most famous of these, now housing the Museum of the China Trade. There are others dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries--several of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

While the wealthy tended to live in what is now Milton, the mill workers tended to settle on the northwesterly side of the river. By the 1830's the Lower Mills area was an intensely developed section of Dorchester. In addition to some fairly substantial but not opulent Georgian and Federal period houses situated along the principal streets of the time, there is a village complex west of Washington Street characterized by wonderful examples of small scale Greek Revival, Italianate and Queen Anne style houses.



ONE OF THE CHOCOLATE MACHINES AT THE MANUFACTORY OF WALTER BAKER & CO. LTD.
CAPACITY, FIVE TONS OF CHOCOLATE DAILY.

Other historic sites in the area of the mills include the site of Daniel Vose tavern, where, on September 9, 1774 seventy patriots passed the Suffolk Resolves which were carried by Paul Revere to Philadelphia where they were enacted by the Continental Congress. The Milton Yacht Club exists on the site of the original town landing of 1658. Down river is the old stone pier dating to the clipper ship era.

PROFILE OF PROJECT AREA

1. Demography

The proposed Heritage Park site is presently surrounded by a series of virtually all white residential neighborhoods, with 75 percent of the existing housing units in single and two-family structures. The presence of large amounts of public open space, including Dorchester Park, Walsh Park and the Neponset River Reservation, contribute to the low density character of the area. These physical attributes, complimented by the reasonable cost of housing, and the area's proximity and easy access to other parts of the City, have made this area an extremely attractive residential neighborhood. The elderly population, which is less than the Dorchester average, has declined in recent years, replaced increasingly by young home buyers moving into the area for the first time.

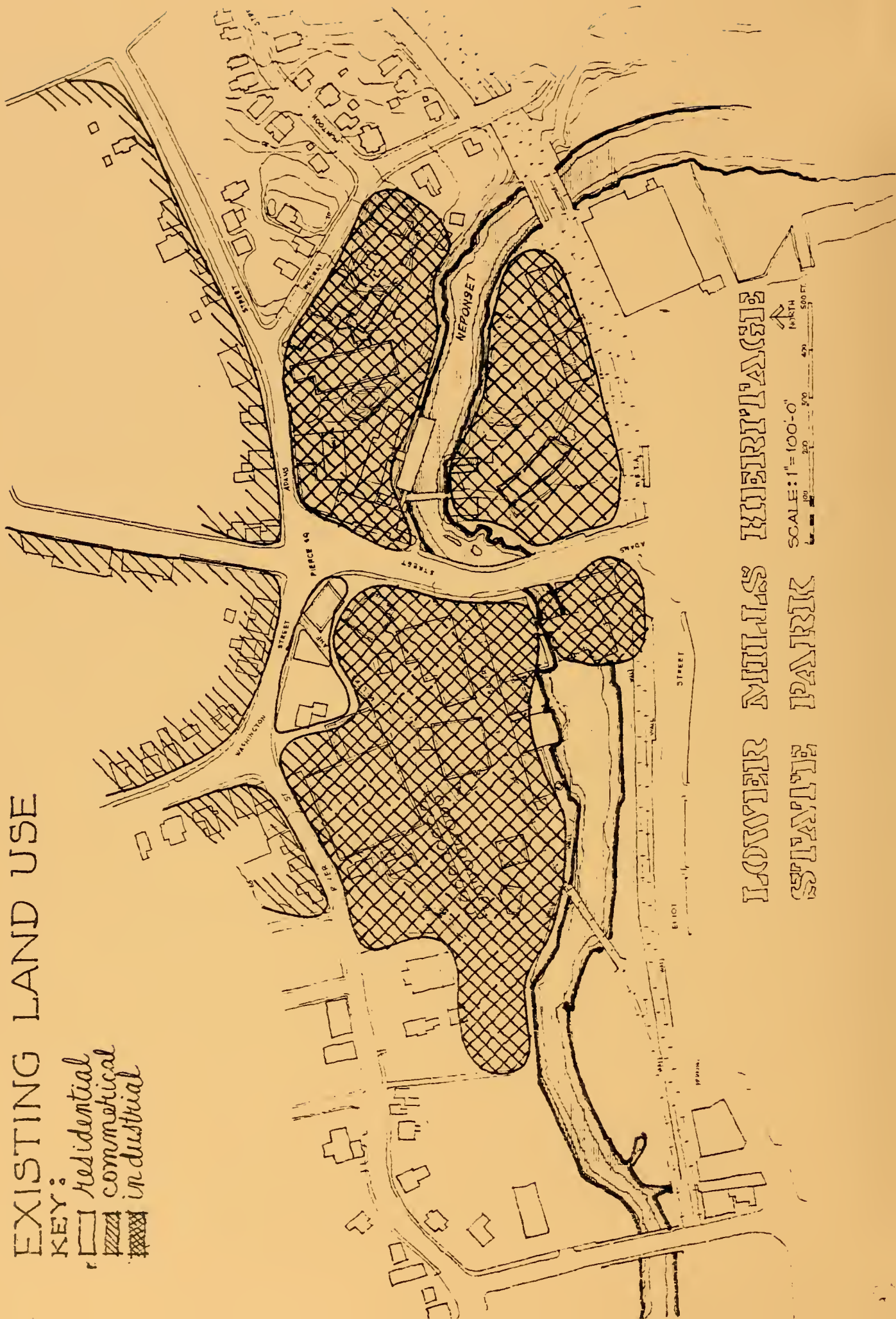
In 1970, the area immediately surrounding the proposed Heritage Park had an unemployment rate of 2.9 percent while Dorchester as a whole had an unemployment rate of 3.7 percent. A 1977 survey placed Dorchester's unemployment rate at 9.9 percent; we could therefore assume that the current employment rate in the area adjacent to the proposed park is about 7-8 percent. Additionally, 53 percent of Dorchester's unemployed collect benefits as compared to the citywide average of 34.1 percent.

2. Commercial Activity

Commercial activity surrounding the proposed Heritage Park site can be found along Dorchester Avenue, Washington Street,

EXISTING LAND USE

KEY:
 [diagonal lines] Residential
 [cross-hatch] Commercial
 [grid-hatch] Industrial



LOWER MILLS INDUSTRIAL
 STATE PARK

SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"



0 100 200 300 400 500 600 FT.

River Street, and some rather limited activity on Adams Street in Milton.

Shops along Dorchester Avenue and Washington Street are comprised primarily of "Mom and Pop" local retail and service stores, along with a number of small eating establishments. These stores receive a healthy daytime utilization by predominantly local residents. At present, there is little vacancy and rental rates are approximately \$6.00 per square foot. The new shopping center along River Street, marked by three chain stores is also primarily utilized by local residents and has been quite successful.

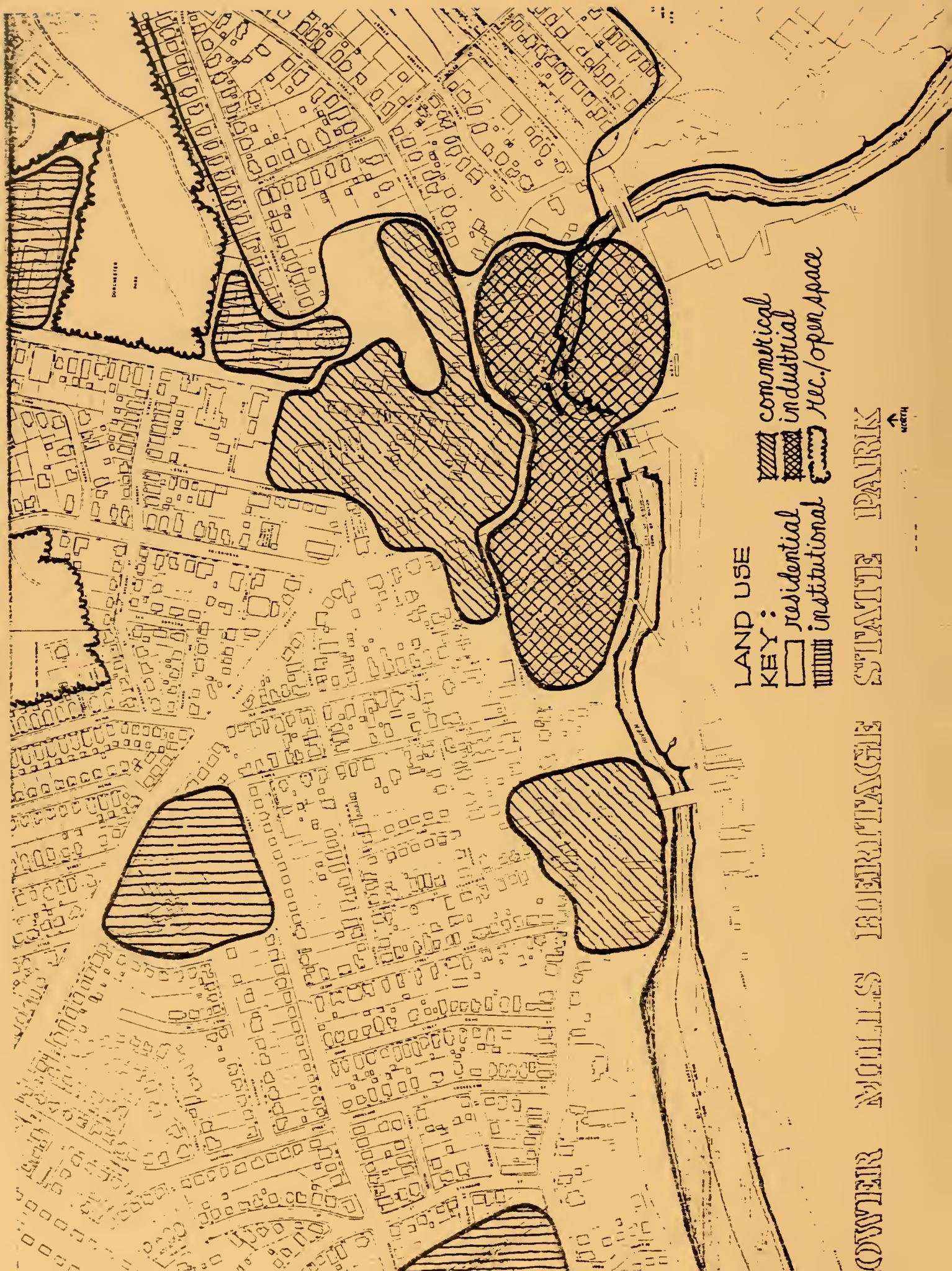
3. Zoning

The Mills property is zoned M-1 and M-2. Under the Boston Zoning Code, retail businesses, office uses, service establishments and eating places are allowed uses in M zones. Apartments and recreational uses are conditional uses -- this is essentially an allowed use but to which special conditions are attached and must be met to permit that use.

The Port Norfolk property is zoned W-2. Under the Boston Zoning Code, all of the above uses are conditional uses in a W zone.

4. The Neighborhoods

The Boston communities that surround the project area are rich with architectural distinction, and noted for their neigh-



LAND USE

KEY:

residential

institutional

commercial

industrial

rec./open space

COWLEY MOULLES BERRIFRAGE

STATE PARK



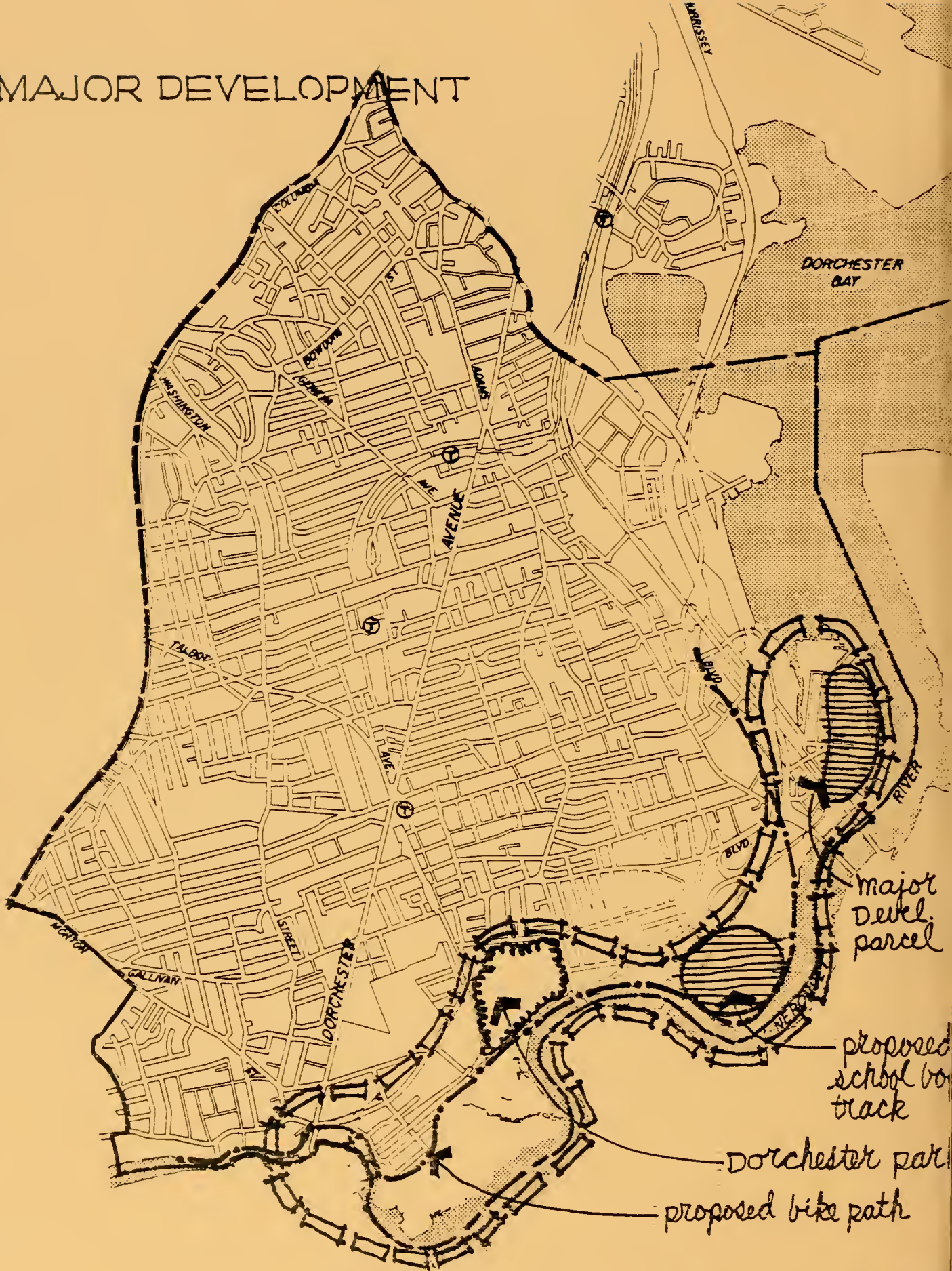
borhood pride, as evidenced by their heavy participation in the City's Housing Improvement Program. The program offers cash rebates to homeowners who rehabilitate owner-occupied one to six family structures. To date eighteen hundred rebates have been given in southern Dorchester.

New public housing for the elderly can be found on Dorchester Avenue in Lower Mills. In Cedar Grove, the old Keystone Camera factory, located on the banks of the Neponset River, is currently being converted into 223 units of subsidized elderly housing. The development of the Heritage Park will serve as a catalyst for future development along the Neponset shoreline. The River itself is a major study area of a \$2.3 million water quality improvement project conducted by MAPC under a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The development of a Heritage Park will complement the City's ongoing efforts in this area to revitalize existing parks and develop new outdoor recreation facilities with available parcels of vacant land. Close to one half million dollars has been spent on Dorchester and Walsh Parks, and new passive and active recreational facilities will soon be available on Hill Top Street in Cedar Grove.

The old Boston incinerator location is the site of the proposed School Boy Track to be constructed by the MDC; there is a state appropriation of over \$6 million to construct this facility.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT



DORCHESTER

0 700 1400 2800 FEET

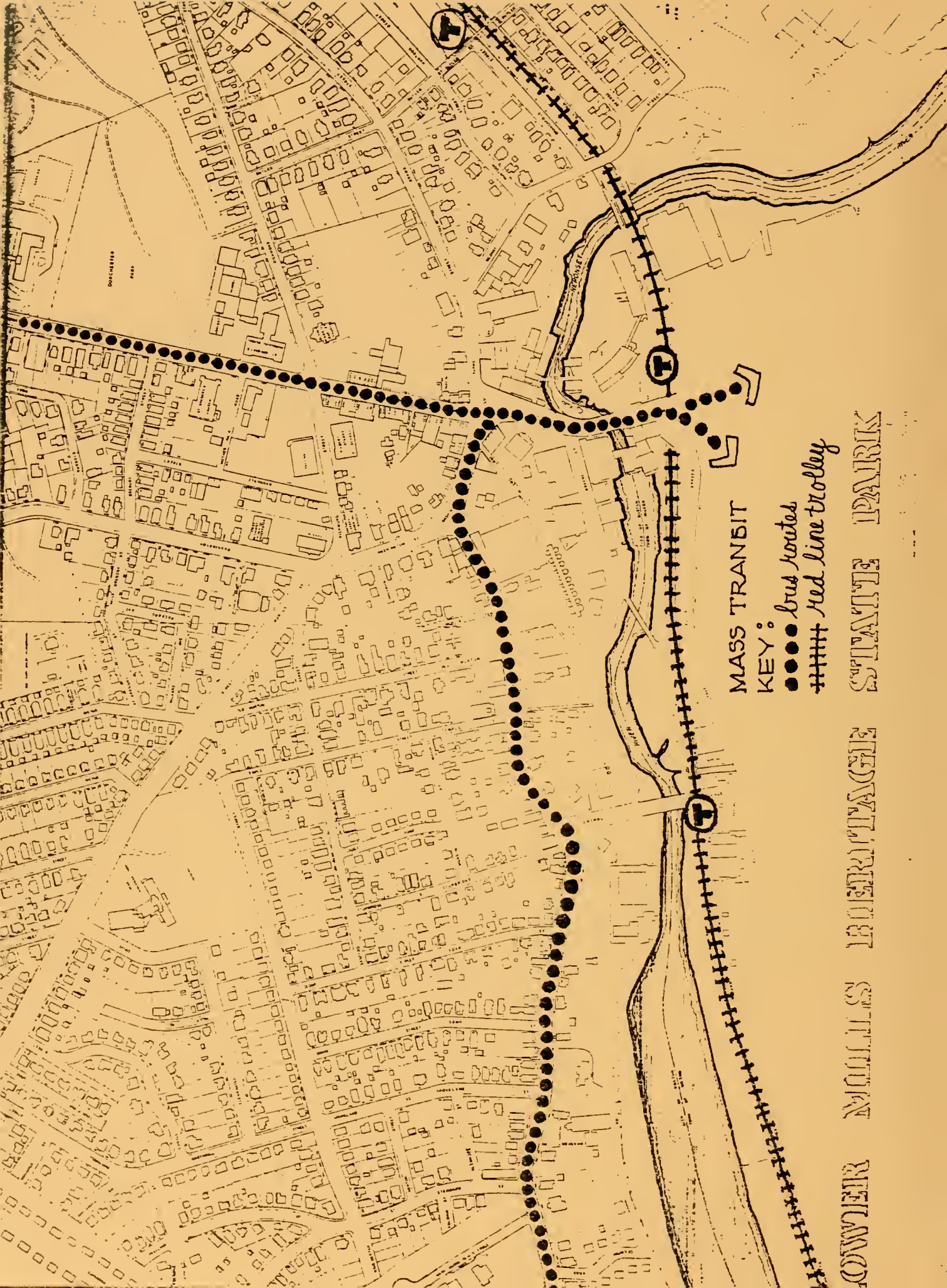


5. Transportation

Presently the study area is accessible by a Red Line trolley which runs from Ashmont Station to Mattapan and stops in four strategic locations: Cedar Grove, Butler Avenue, Milton (site of Heritage Park Mills), and Central Avenue. Buses also run from Ashmont Station down Dorchester Avenue to River Street, Adams Street and Central Avenue in Milton.

The City is currently analyzing several options for new stops on the Quincy branch of the Red Line at Tenean Street/Morrissey Boulevard Circle. Proposed development in this area would serve as an incentive for new station locations.

The Heritage Park sites are easily accessible from the Southeast Expressway which connects to Routes 93 and 128. The Lower Mills site is within 1 3/4 miles of the Granite Avenue interchange of the Southeast Expressway and the Port Norfolk site is within 1/4 mile of another interchange on the Expressway.



MASS TRANSIT

KEY:

●●● bus routes

+++++ red line trolley

STATE PARK

BOETICHAFF

MILLS

COWLES

to route 93

TRANSPORTATION

KEY:

← major route

← minor route



Lower Mills
Heritage State
Park

to route 128



DORCHESTER

CONCEPT OF PARK DEVELOPMENT

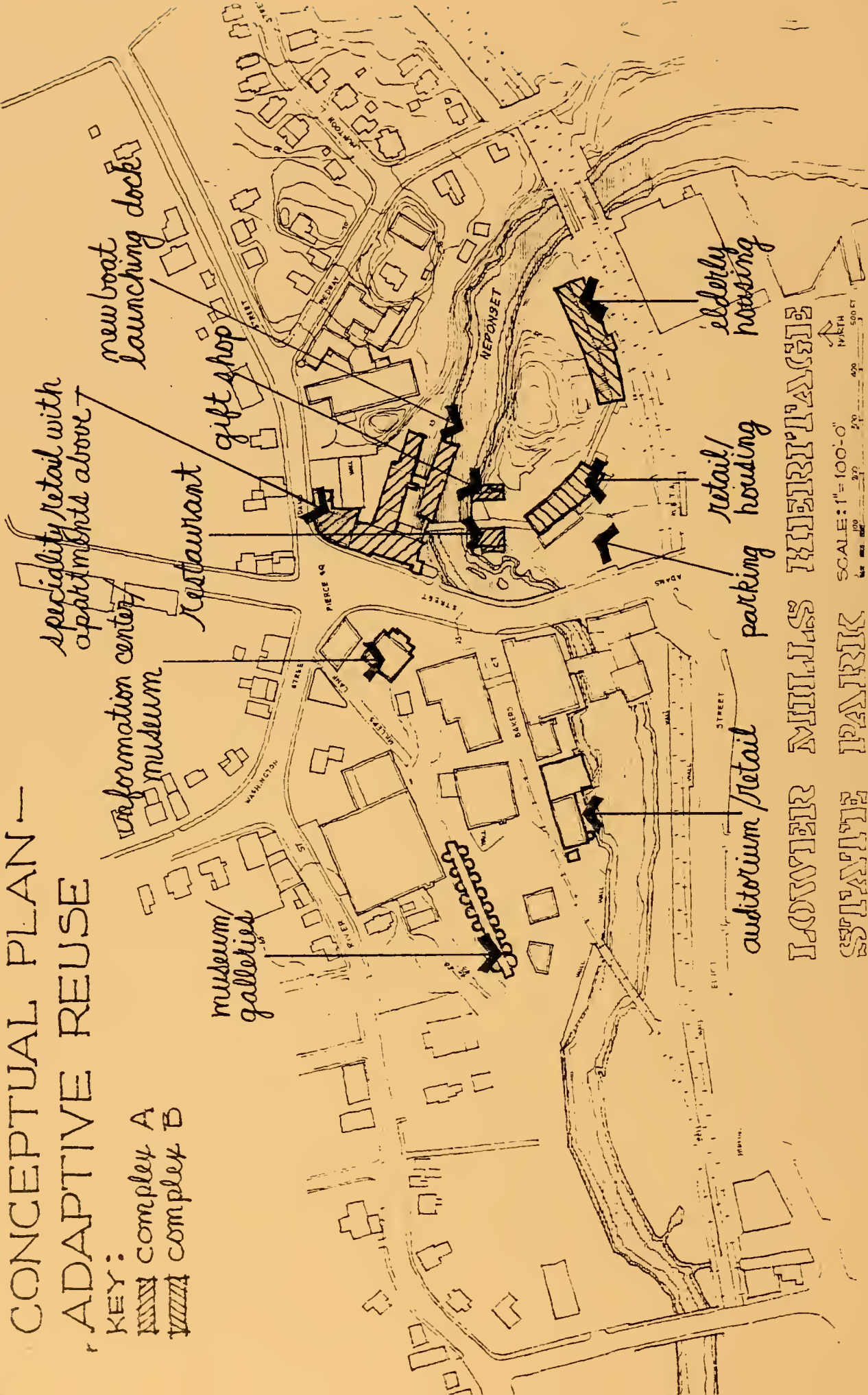
Development of the Lower Mills complex and surrounding open space into a Heritage Park would begin with the identification of the mill buildings and their historical significance. Each building of the complex would bear a placque identifying it by name, date of construction, and a short narrative on the role it played in the economic development of the area. Other buildings and sites surrounding the mill complex would also be selected for similar identification.

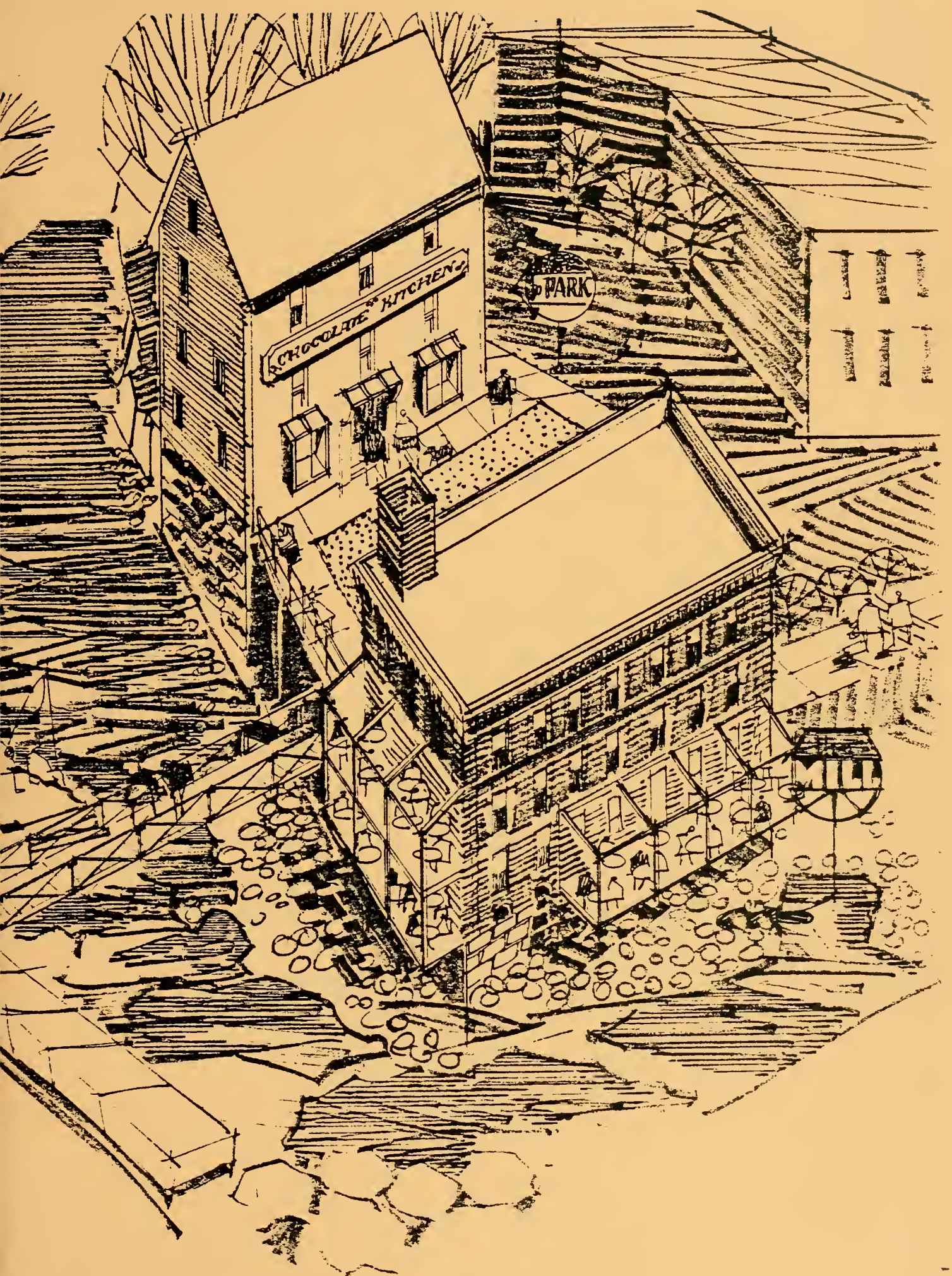
One or more of the mill buildings will be converted into a Visitor Information Center and Museum. One outstanding possibility is the former Baker Chocolate Administration Building. Tentatively, it will be managed and staffed as a joint venture by the City of Boston and Town of Milton, possibly through private contracting arrangements. At the Center, visitors will receive information brochures describing the area, buildings, trails and sitting areas. Guided tours will be available through the Center and maps will be provided to those who prefer to tour independently.

The Museum will reflect in graphic fashion the various uses and changes that the mill area has experienced over the years. For example, the importance of the Neponset River as the focal point of settlement will be stressed. The River provided fishing grounds for the very first settlers, the Indians. This particular point of the River was chosen by white settlers for mill development because of the navigable waters from Lower Mills to Dorchester Bay.

CONCEPTUAL PLAN— ADAPTIVE REUSE

KEY:
 [diagonal lines] complex A
 [cross-hatch] complex B





Various exhibits will trace this development and utilization from Indian fishing grounds, to one-by-one mill development, and ultimately to the consolidation of these individual mills into one major production group, Walter Baker Chocolate, Inc.

Walter Baker Co. (now a subsidiary of General Foods, Inc.) has expressed strong interest in contributing toward the project. Several old photographs may be available for display including a reproduction of its traditional logo, "La Belle Chocolatiere." There is also a possibility of developing a mini-chocolate making facility in one of the rehabilitated buildings. Baker Chocolate's Public Relations Division is currently researching the types of memorabilia and artifacts they could contribute to an educational exhibit for visitors.

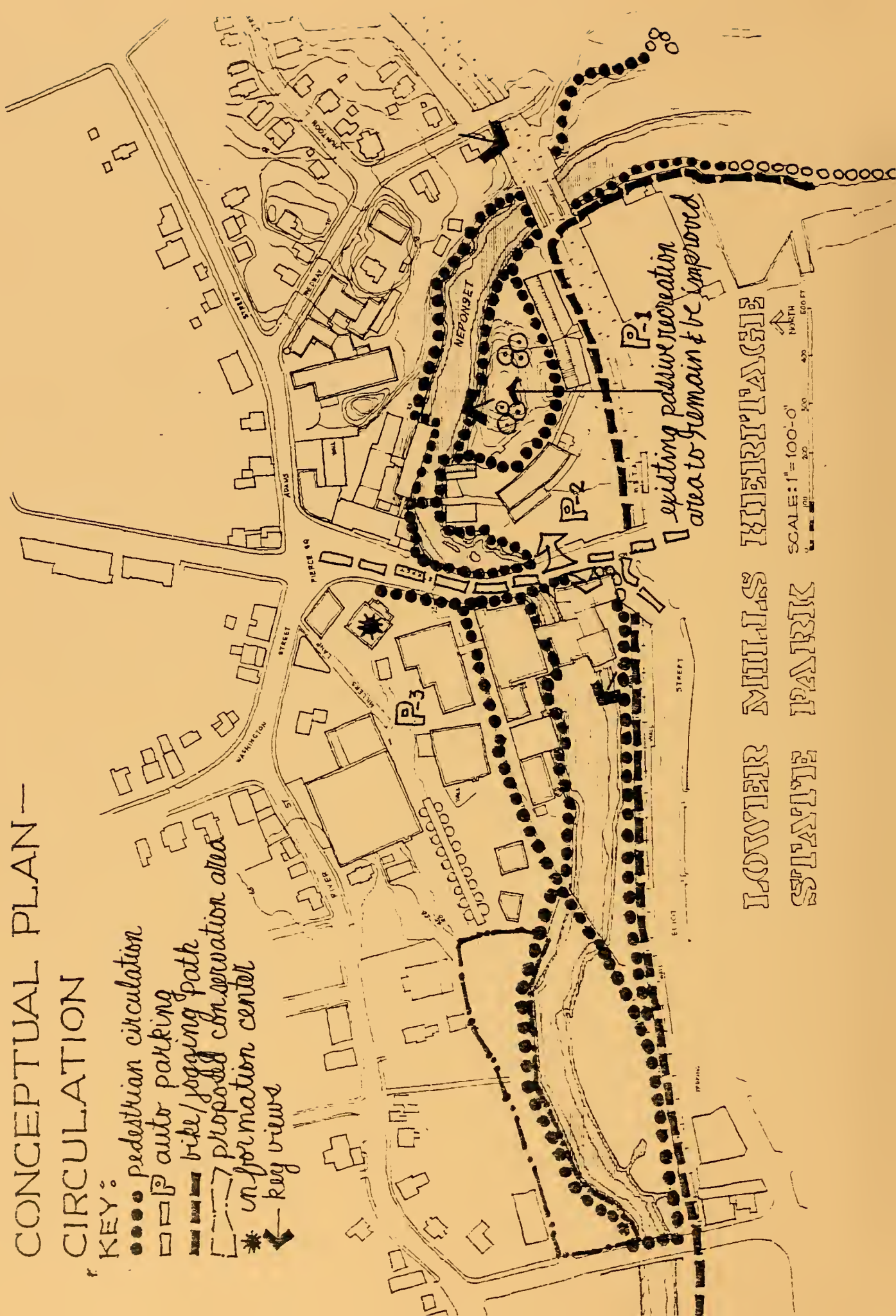
Besides the Walter Baker contributions, slide shows, narratives and photographs depicting the changing use of the area over time would provide colorful insights into its history.

A "Freedom Trail" type of walkway will be planned through the area to aid visitors on their tour. The route will incorporate walkways, historic markers, key observation points, fishing sites, and picnic areas. It will also include the construction of wooden walkways along and above the river banks to provide access to the granite outcroppings just downstream from the mills. (See map of park concept.) This would provide a panoramic view of a lovely urban wild setting and allow visitors to go back and forth from the mill buildings, river lookout points and the museum. The sitting areas would provide an attractive site for enjoyment of nature and simple relaxation.

CONCEPTUAL PLAN— CIRCULATION

KEY:

- pedestrian circulation
- auto parking
- bike/jogging path
- proposed conservation area
- * information center
- ← key views



LOWER MILLS WHERRY'S ESTATE

SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"

STATE PARK

existing passive recreation area to remain & be improved

P-1

P-2

P-3

Another more active access route would be the jogging or walking path. Once rehabilitated and relandscaped, this path would run through the picturesque Cedar Grove area, along the edge of the Metropolitan Park Estuary and end in a passive sitting area at the Dorchester Lower Mills Complex. The Estuary, a protected environmental marshland, is quiet and visually pleasing. Along the path, other sitting and rest areas would be built so that visitors could enjoy the serene character of this protected area.

The Mills developed along this portion of the Neponset River because the waters were navigable to this point and many large ships, schooners and brigs could dock at what is now the Milton Town Landing. This area of the river is still used today for small pleasure craft and it is anticipated that a "ferry system" or scenic boat tour would be instituted. The boat tour would cover that portion of the River from Lower Mills to Granite Avenue in Dorchester. A landing currently exists at Granite Avenue, but development and redesign would be necessary in order to make it usable as part of a boat tour program. Parking facilities at this point will also be provided. The boat tour itself would follow the Neponset River through the Estuary up to the Mills and back again. Through a cooperative effort on the part of the City of Boston, the Town of Milton and perhaps the Metropolitan District Commission, the use and maintenance of this area would be insured.







In fact, the successful rehabilitation of the Mill area rests on a high degree of cooperation between the two local communities,

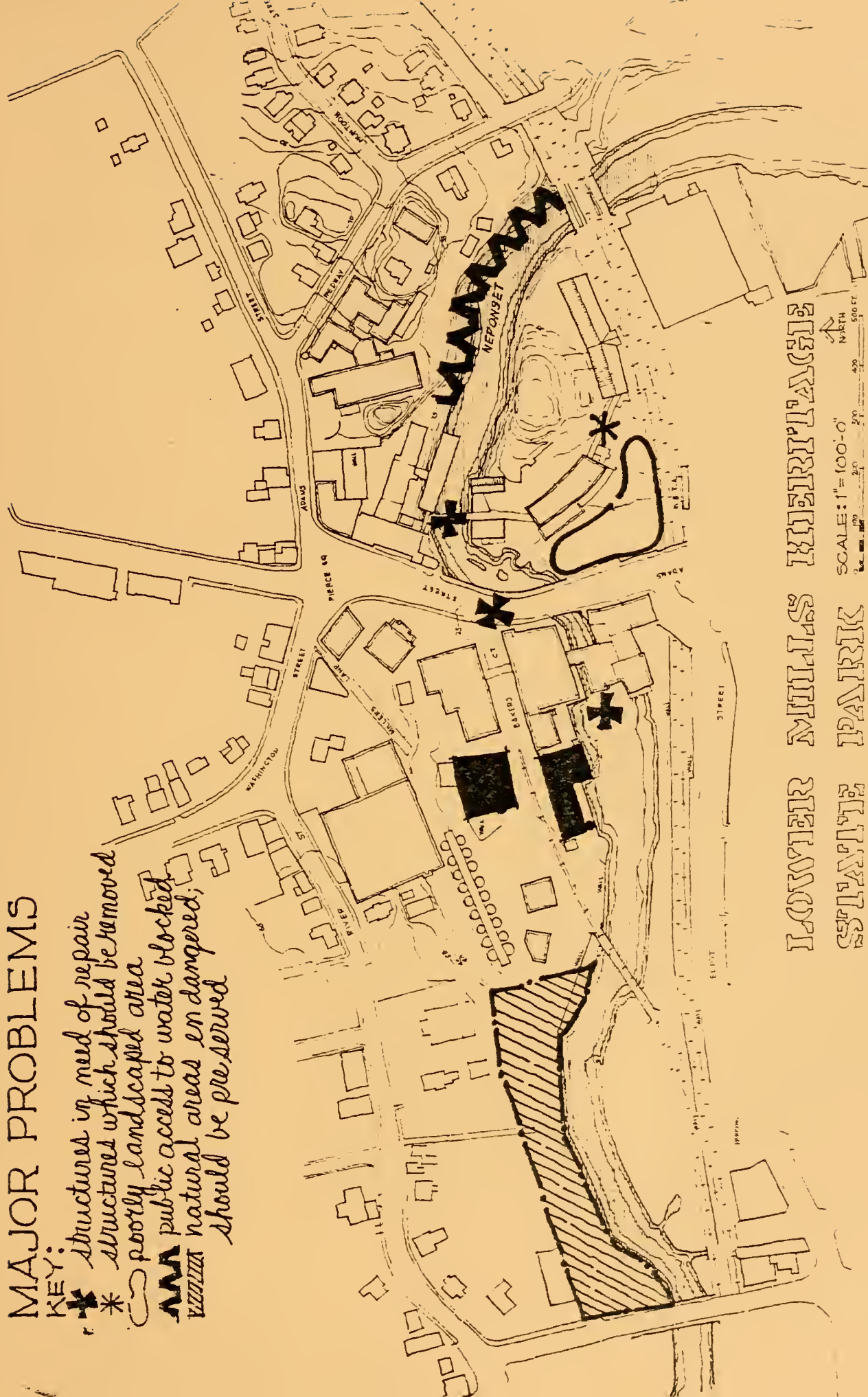
Boston and Milton. On their respective sides of the Neponset both offer historic and esthetically valuable sites which visitors will find fascinating and enjoyable. Accordingly, the basic planning, design, management and staffing of park resources will be coordinated with the two municipalities as well as recognized community organizations.

Apart from creating specific facilities, the park concept involves a rehabilitation process for all buildings and open space. Where necessary, exterior brick facades will be repointed and restored. Old bridges connecting the former mill buildings will be rehabilitated. New sign codes will create a more uniform appearance throughout the district. In creating a more attractive park atmosphere the City will plan a general upgrading of municipal land -- sidewalks, streets, signs and traffic signalization. Old, neglected features (such as cobblestone) will be brought back to life wherever feasible.

MAJOR PROBLEMS

KEY:

-  Structures in need of repair
-  Structures which should be removed
-  poorly landscaped area
-  public access to water blocked
-  natural areas endangered;
-  should be preserved



LOWER MILLS WATERFRONT AREA
STANTON PARK

SCALE: 1" = 100'-0"

NORTH

PROJECT BENEFITS

The Heritage Parks Program represents a new and unique opportunity to pursue goals for the over-all revitalization of the Lower Mills neighborhood business district and its surrounding areas, in both Boston and Milton. Park facilities -- picnic areas, observation points, historic exhibits, fishing ladders, bicycle and walking paths -- will themselves be satisfying recreational and cultural amenities. More importantly, the Heritage Park can serve as a catalyst for other improvements and developments in the Neponset River Valley area, including the revitalization of industrialized land in the Port Norfolk area.

Within the Mill area itself, abandoned structures can be given new life through re-use appropriate to visitors and incoming retail trade that the park is expected to generate. For example, the old Ware mill and its wood-frame neighbor are prime candidates for a restaurant, small museum and/or visitor-oriented shops. Based on further engineering analysis, it may even be feasible to convert the former silos into new innovative commercial space. Creation of the park and reclamation of the land and buildings it will entail, promises to enhance the attractiveness of several such possibilities to developers.

Other adaptive re-use possibilities involve properties which, while not abandoned, are under-utilized in terms of their full commercial or residential potential. Two principal re-use possibilities, as shown on the proposed land-use map, involve:

- (1) Ground-floor space in the "A" complex of buildings, approximately 25,000 square feet, could be converted into specialty retail use. Included might be several restaurants (taking advantage of river views), small apparel stores, gift shops, and specialty food stores. Barrier-free pedestrian circulation would be primarily internal (and thus weather-protected). Outdoors, the bridge and courtyard could be used in good weather for flea markets, art fairs, musical entertainment and other community activities. The upper stories in the "A" complex would be converted to apartments and offices, making allowance for compatible businesses that already exist.

A single developer would be selected for this complex and would be responsible for both housing and retail development.

- (2) The "B" complex of buildings, if not used for housing, could be marketed to a single retail establishment (such as a popular apparel store). The buildings would function as an anchor for shopping in the park. Parking can be provided in proximity to both complexes. P-1 would accommodate approximately 120 cars, P-2, approximately 50.

Assessment of further re-use potential will require detailed study,

but changes in the use of the mill area buildings need not be perfectly simultaneous with development of park facilities. As the area becomes more attractive, and parts of the mills are restored and protected (through easements and acquisitions), the district is expected to attract more appropriate uses on its own, apart from uses made possible by deliberate relocation efforts.

The Heritage Park project will realize substantial economic and community development benefits for Dorchester which, with its 160,000 residents, is Boston's largest neighborhood. After experiencing a large influx of middle-income families in the past five years, Dorchester has found its shopping and entertainment facilities overtaxed and inadequate. Shopper surveys conducted within Dorchester have revealed widespread dissatisfaction about the lack of diversity in retail goods and services, and the small number of good restaurants. Perhaps the fastest growing segment of the area's market are the young, upwardly mobile families whose tastes and shopping preferences are particularly under-served by existing businesses.

These are all shortcomings which Dorchester's older business districts will have difficulty in overcoming, due to land-use density (the shopping areas have nowhere to grow) or because of the size of their trade area, which is not sufficient to support a larger variety of retail uses.

Yet, the Lower Mills Heritage Park will be able to satisfy this unmet demand in virtually all retail categories, thus giving a much needed boost to the commercial revitalization of Dorchester.

The Park will do what Dorchester's older business district cannot do, for two reasons:

(1) The Park will offer the ambience which specialty retailing and restaurants thrive on: fascinating architecture, lack of traffic congestion and noise, and outdoor eating and recreational facilities. In other words, though still in a twentieth century city, patrons will be able to escape to an earlier time for shopping and dining.

(2) The Park will capture primary and secondary markets considerably larger than those of any nearby commercial district. The primary market area -- Milton and southern Dorchester -- can be expected to use the facility on a more or less regular basis, particularly for those kinds of businesses not available elsewhere in the area. The secondary market area -- tourists and sightseers -- will boost patronage seasonally and on weekends and should increase retail sales to well beyond what would be possible in a typical neighborhood shopping district setting. This will make it possible to attract many companies to Dorchester which, until now, have found hospitable retail environments only in Downtown Boston and the suburbs. As some of the more marginal industrial users relocate, the park development will be a magnet to new, more appropriate commercial activity.

Interest has already been expressed in redeveloping certain properties in the area. The Town of Milton has examined the possibility of converting one of the larger warehouse buildings, lying along the railroad right-of-way, into elderly housing. An

alternative possibility for this structure is a large apparel or other retail store, serving as an anchor for the project's shopping component.

INVENTORY DESCRIPTION OF MILL AREA BUILDINGS

The oldest of the existing Baker Company buildings is probably the Pierce Mill (later called Mill No. 1), built, according to the Walter Baker Calendar, in 1872. Unfortunately, the architect of this handsome Second Empire structure is not known. Located on Adams Street at Pierce Square, this mill with its central mansarded pavilion and two smaller flanking ones is still the visual focus of the whole group.

The first mill -- as far as is known -- to be designed by what was to become the "company firm" was the Webb Mill (Mill No. 4) in Milton, built in 1882 from plans of Bradlee, Winslow and Wetherell.^{*} This is an attractive but by no means avant-garde building designed in the current Romanesque Revival. By the late '80's and '90's, the firm was designing buildings for the Baker Company in a non-Academic version of the Renaissance Revival. One of the best of these is Building G and H of Mill No. 1, which rounds the corner of Adams Street. This was built in 1888-89, and the very similar Baker Mill was built in 1891. Other buildings definitely attributed to the firm are the Preston Mill (1903) and several outbuildings. Buildings almost certainly by Winslow and Bigelow are the Ware Mill (1902), the Power House (1906) and the Forbes Mill (1911).

*

During the period under study, the firm did business under the following names: Bradlee, Winslow and Wetherell (1882-87), Winslow and Wetherell (1888-98), Winslow, Wetherell and Bigelow (1899-1900) and Winslow and Bigelow (1901-08).

The stylistic consistency shown by this architectural firm during the thirty years that the Baker Company was its client has already been commented on; the same characteristic has been observed in the two Walker Buildings (Winslow and Wetherell, 1891, and Winslow and Bigelow, 1901) described in the Park Square Survey (see above, Part I, p. 6). The Romanesque Revival utilized in the Webb Mill of 1882 and the Renaissance Revival used in the later buildings were both sufficiently diluted that they could share similar motifs and blend quite imperceptibly with each other. In 1918, a break was made with the firm, which still existed under the name of Bigelow and Wadsworth, and an architect named George F. Shepard was called in to design the Georgian Revival Administration Building. After that date, the Baker Company appears to have built only storehouses and outbuildings, as well as additions and remodelling of no special architectural significance.

Walter Baker Buildings

1220 Adams Street,
Dorchester

Mill No. 1 -- Pierce Mill, Bldg. A. 1872. Brick with mansarded pavilions. Bldg. A. is probably the oldest part of existing mill complex. Office and bridge to Bldgs. G&H are later. (The Walter Baker Calendar lists a brick mill built in 1868 with an addition in 1869; the location of this mill is unclear, but it may have been on the site of Bldgs. B-D of Mill No. 1.)

1210-14 Adams Street
(rear), Dorchester

Mill No. 1, Bldg. F. 1881. A building permit of 4/15/81 probably refers to this building; dimensions and description fit. Vernacular brick warehouse with a pitch roof and dormers. Looks even earlier than date. Exists on 1884 but not on 1885 Atlas.

1 Eliot Street (corner
of Adams), Milton

Mill No. 4 -- Webb Mill, Bldgs. A & B. 1882. Bradlee, Winslow and Wetherell. Interior remodellings and mechanical improvements by Winslow and Bigelow in 1906. Romanesque Revival brick mill with brownstone trim. Original plans in possession of present owner, William Greely.

1200 Adams Street,
Dorchester

Mill No. 1, Bldgs. G-F (later referred to as the Adams Street Mill). 1888-89. Winslow and Wetherell. Brick mill buildings with curving facade on corner of Adams Street. Building permit of 4/11/88 refers to this building. Cost \$250,000 (Damrell, p. 80).

1245 Adams Street,
Dorchester

Mill No. 5, Baker Mill, Bldgs. A-B. 1891. Winslow and Wetherell. Brick mill building on corner of Baker's Court. Cost \$135,000 (Damrell, p. 76).

Adams Street,
Milton

Mill No. 3, Ware Mill. 1902. Almost certainly by Winslow and Bigelow. Small brick mill which closely resembles the Preston Mill. Built on site of earlier frame mill.

Adams Street,
Dorchester

Mill No. 2, Preston Mill. Winslow and Bigelow. Brick mill built on site of earlier frame mill. Site was first a fulling mill, owned by the Preston family, and later a chocolate mill. Building permit of 4/23/03, which includes a letter from Winslow and Bigelow, refers to this building.

Baker's Court,
Dorchester

Power House. 1906. First electrical power plant of the Baker Company. Probably by Winslow and Bigelow.

1235 Adams Street,
Dorchester

Mill No. 6, Forbes Mill. 1911.
This brick mill is a twin to the
neighboring Baker Mill. Almost
certainly by Bigelow and Wadsworth,
successors to Winslow and Wetherell,
since it seems most unlikely that
an architect would copy a building
designed by another firm 20 years
earlier.

1231 Adams Street,
Dorchester

Administration Building. 1918.
George F. Shepard. (now used by
the Boston Welfare Department).
Georgian Revival office building.
Building permit of 5/18/18 refers to
this building.

Adams Street,
Milton

Two brick storehouses connected with
each other and with the Ware Mill.
1. 1890's and early 20th c. Store-
house on RR tracks dates from at
least 1896 (Milton Atlas) and is
illustrated in "Cocoa and Chocolate,"
1910, p. 69.

APPENDIX

COST ESTIMATES

Relocation and acquisition	\$2,500,000
Design, feasibility analysis and marketing	500,000
Public improvements (parking, street, sidewalk and lighting improvements and park facilities)	2,000,000
<u>Total:</u>	\$5,000,000

HERITAGE STATE PARK PROPOSAL - SUMMARY SHEET

<u>Name of Project:</u>	Lower Mills Heritage Park
<u>Submitting Agent:</u>	City of Boston
<u>Contact (Name & Title):</u>	Paul Horn, Project Coordinator Office of Program Development Room 808 Boston City Hall Tel. (617) 725-3442
<u>Park Theme:</u>	To preserve, exhibit and explain the heritage of a 19th century mill and factory town; and to take advantage of its resources, natural and man-made, to create new commercial, residential and recreational opportunities.
<u>Brief Description of Heritage Resources:</u>	Resources include the Neponset River, 19th century power house and mills, former Baker Chocolate factory building and related structures.
<u>Number of Parcels:</u>	20
<u>Estimated Cost:</u>	\$5,000,000

NEPONSET CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

INCORPORATED

October 26, 1978

Mr. Paul Horn
Capital Improvements Coordinator
Office of Program Development
City Hall, Boston, MA., 02201

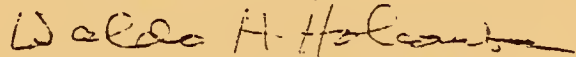
Dear Mr. Horn:

This Association is very enthusiastic about the Dorchester Lower Mills/Lower Neponset River program you are developing, it seems to be quite similar to our own 1974 program for which we were never able to resolve the funding problem. Our membership needs no new pressure for support, our question is: how do we help?

This river is an excellent choice for this kind of development it being essentially unchanged since colonial days. Except for a small stretch in HydePark its banks have been largely protected from serious building encroachment and the estuary is still in an almost natural state. No other river in the Boston area is as little spoiled.

We would like to point out that the nearby comparatively large urban population in Dorchester, Mattapan and Hyde Park are living in an area almost devoid of local parkland. A development such as you propose would be most welcome and appropriate. I can think of no area for which there is greater need to get the school kids off the city streets after school or in the summer.

Sincerely yours,



Waldo H. Holcombe, Pres.
180 Canton Avenue
Milton, Mass., 02187

cc.: Mrs. Eugenie Beal



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

TOWN OF MILTON

OFFICE OF SELECTMEN

SELECTMEN

WALTER F. TIMILTY
CHAIRMAN

JOHN P. LINEHAN
SECRETARY

JAMES D. COLT

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
JOHN A. CRONIN

October 26, 1978

Mr. Paul Horn
Capital Improvements Coordinator
Mayor's Office of Program Development
City Hall - Room 808
Boston, Massachusetts 02110

Dear Mr. Horn:

LOWER MILLS HERITAGE PARK PROPOSAL

We thank you for including Milton in preliminary discussions with yourself and Marsha Myers, Chief of Environmental Planning, BRA Division of Historic Properties regarding the development of a Heritage Park Proposal for the Lower Mills area.

On behalf of the Town, please be assured that we have an interest and concern for the Lower Mills area and we have encouraged our Planning and Engineering staff to work with the City of Boston in developing a program for improvements.

Very truly yours,

Walter F. Timilty

John P. Linehan

J. D. Colt

Board of Selectmen

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

MILL STUDIES PROJECT
Room 20B-232
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

October 26, 1978

Ms. Marcia Meyers
Boston Landmarks Commission
City Hall
Boston, MA

Dear Marcia:

I am very pleased to hear that there is a possibility of developing a State Heritage Park at Dorchester Lower Mills. As the site of the first water powered mill in the New World, as well as the first gun powder mill and the first chocolate factory, the district is of national historic interest. It is the only water power site in the city of Boston (excluding tidal mills) and the last surviving intact nineteenth-century Boston industrial complex. For all these reasons, the MIT Mill Studies Project has initiated a research program centering on the Lower Mills district, with students photodocumenting the site, working up a historic profile of the district based on ward maps, and starting a search of the Baker Chocolate Company archives at the Baker Library (no relation). My informal discussions with scholars active in the Society for Industrial Archeology and the Society for the History of Technology have aroused substantial interest in the site. Patrick Malone, Director of Slater Mill Historic Site, and a leading authority on New England water power systems, is eager to study the special features of water power generation there. As a member of the State Historical Commission Cultural Resources Planning Team, I have been intending to focus on Lower Mills in an effort to increase the Commission's awareness of and action on industrial sites.

This is a propitious moment to pull together all these interests. If I can be of any assistance in your plans for proposing this State Heritage Park, I would be very pleased.

Sincerely yours,



Michael Brewster Folsom
Research Associate in
American Studies

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